

Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MontCAS)  
Phase 2

# CRT Accommodation Manual

## Spring 2009



**Montana Office of Public Instruction**  
**Denise Juneau, Superintendent**

## Important Phone Numbers

As a Test Coordinator or teacher who is administering Montana's Criterion-Referenced Test, you may have questions about the use of accommodations that are not answered in this Manual. Contact people, and their areas of responsibility, are listed below.

- For information about program policy issues, contact:

**Judy Snow, State Assessment Director**

Phone: (406) 444-3656

E-Mail: [jsnow@mt.gov](mailto:jsnow@mt.gov)

OR

**Karen Richem, OPI Assessment Specialist**

Phone: (406) 444-0748

Email: [krichem@mt.gov](mailto:krichem@mt.gov)

- For information about ELL/LEP, contact:

**Lynn Hinch, OPI Bilingual Specialist**

Phone: (406) 444-3482

Email: [lhinch@mt.gov](mailto:lhinch@mt.gov)

- For information about standard and nonstandard accommodations, contact:

**Tim Harris, Director**

OPI Division of Special Education

Phone: (406) 444-4429

Email: [tharris@mt.gov](mailto:tharris@mt.gov)

OR

**Gail McGregor, Research Professor**

University of Montana

Phone: (406) 243-2348

Email: [mcmgregor@ruralinstitute.umt.edu](mailto:mcmgregor@ruralinstitute.umt.edu)

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## The Legislative Mandate for an Inclusive Accountability System

Since the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997, policy makers, administrators, and teachers have been working to implement new provisions of this law focused on improving the academic outcomes for students with disabilities. The term *access to the general education curriculum* appeared, along with requirements that all students with disabilities be included in statewide assessment. This has prompted the creation of a range of test participation options, making it possible for students with even the most significant disabilities to be assessed on a test aligned with general education content standards. These requirements, further extended in the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (i.e., No Child Left Behind), were reaffirmed in the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA. The key elements of these major pieces of legislation related to assessment and accountability are highlighted in the table on the following page.

The driving philosophy underlying these new requirements is that all students must be able to reap the benefits of a standards-based education (Elliot & Thurlow, 2006). While assessment is just one piece of the standards-based reform paradigm, the thinking is that what students are taught on a daily basis should be aligned with the content of student assessments. The concept of access to the general education curriculum emerges as a critical component of this educational reform model. Drawing upon a number of recent publications, Elliot and Thurlow (2006) have summarized the assumptions that provide a rationale for including all students, including those with disabilities, in statewide assessment and accountability systems. These assumptions are described in the box on this page.

**Assumption 1: All children can learn.** This seemingly simple statement is at the core of the concept of including all students in educational accountability systems. It contains a recognition that all learning is important. It also encompasses an understanding of the dramatic effects that expectations can have on the learning of individual children, particularly those who are performing below the level of other children who are the same as them in one way or another.

**Assumption 2: Schools are responsible for the learning of all children.** A strong premise underlying American public education is that schools are a mechanism to bring equality to all children, regardless of background. Over time, policymakers have recognized that individuals who have disabilities are people first, and have the same rights as other citizens. Although it has taken some strong public laws to ensure that these rights are recognized and upheld, these rights remain an integral part of the assumptions underlying an inclusive accountability system.

**Assumption 3: Whenever children are counted, all children must count.** To have an inclusive accountability system, students who have disabilities must count in the same way as other children. Not all students have to take the same test to be counted, but they must count. Special approaches must be decided on up front with stakeholders talking to each other. But the bottom line is that all students must count - no ifs, ands, or buts.

Language from IDEA consistent in the parameters established for participation of all students in statewide assessment and accountability systems. For the purposes of this manual, language specific to the use of accommodations in both instruction and assessment has been highlighted.

**Table 1: Selected Concepts of IDEA 1997, IDEA 2004, and NCLB About Inclusive Assessment And Accountability** (Modified from Elliott & Thurlow, 2006, pg. 3-4)

<p><b>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA 1997)</b></p> <p><u>Access to the General Curriculum</u>: Students with disabilities must have access to, participate in, and make progress in, the general education curriculum; they also must receive the services, supports, <b>accommodations</b>, and adaptations to ensure their participation and progress.</p> <p><u>Participation in State and Districtwide Assessments</u>: Students with disabilities are to participate in state and district-wide general assessments, <b>with appropriate accommodations</b>, where needed.</p> <p><u>Develop Alternate Assessments</u>: States are to develop alternate assessments for those students who cannot participate in general assessments given by states or districts.</p> <p><u>Public Reporting of Results</u>: Whenever the state publicly reports data on students without disabilities, it is required to also report disaggregated data on students with disabilities, including the number participating in the general assessment and their performance and the number participating in the alternate assessment and their performance.</p>
<p><b>Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004)</b></p> <p><u>Accommodations</u>: The state must report the number of children with disabilities who were provided <b>accommodations</b> in order to participate in regular assessments.</p>
<p><b>No Child Left Behind</b></p> <p><u>Adequate Yearly Progress</u>: Each state is to define the annual progress targets and benchmarks that indicate adequate yearly progress to move all students from their performance levels in 2001-2002 to 100% proficient in the year 2014. These targets must be met by all students overall, as well as by each subgroup of students.</p> <p><u>Subgroups</u>: Groups of students included in the NCLB accountability system include ethnic and minority groups, low socioeconomic groups, English language learners (students with limited English proficiency), and students with disabilities.</p> <p><u>Alternate Assessments</u>: Requirements for these assessments include that they are (1) aligned with the state's academic content standards and (2) measure the achievement of students with disabilities against alternate academic achievement standards if the state has adopted them.</p>

## The “Who, What, and Why” of Test Accommodations

In an assessment and accountability system in which the performance of all students “counts,” it is important to use educationally sound and permissible practices that enable students to demonstrate what they know. For many students with disabilities and those for whom English is a second language, the standard format and testing procedure may present a barrier. The use of accommodations is a proactive response to this situation.

### **Why are accommodations used in testing?**

As discussed in the previous section of this manual, there is an expectation that all students should have access to the general education curriculum in order to master the skills that are associated with state curriculum standards (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2005). There is a growing awareness of the importance of using varied approaches in providing instruction to diverse learners, including those with disabilities. Teachers increasingly are striving to match instructional methodologies to the learning styles and abilities of learners so that weaknesses in one skill area (e.g., reading), do not prevent the student from accessing information in other areas (e.g., science, social studies). Instructional differentiation, the use of multiple modalities to present information to students, and the use of varied methods to assess learning are characteristics of classroom instruction that is responsive to a full range of learners (Hitchcock, Meyer, Rose & Jackson, 2002). For many students, these varied methods and specific accommodations are part of their daily instruction and are critical to their success as students.

It is only natural that the methods used to facilitate learning on a daily basis for students in the classroom are, to the extent possible, used in the assessment context. If accommodations were unavailable for testing, the test results would reflect the impact of a disability, language limitation, or particular learning style on a student’s ability to demonstrate knowledge rather than the student’s true skills and abilities.

### **What are accommodations?**

**Accommodations are changes in the way a test is administered or responded to by the student who is being tested.** Any changes made must be carefully considered for each individual student. There should be a clear and direct relationship between a limitation imposed by a disability or language difference, and the change in testing practice provided for this student. An accommodation is intended to “level the playing field”, not provide an unfair advantage.

Accommodations fall into two categories, depending upon the interaction between *what is changed* in the test administration to enable a student to participate and *what is being measured* on the test. While accommodation decisions should be based on individual student need, it is important to be aware of the implications of these decisions for school accountability (i.e., Adequate Yearly Progress) purposes. A description and comparison of these two categories of accommodations are provided in Table 2.

**Table 2: Standard and Nonstandard Accommodations**

<b>Standard Accommodations</b> are changes in the way in which a student participates in a test that do not alter what the test is designed to measure.	<b>Nonstandard Accommodations</b> are accommodations that change what is being measured by a test.
<b>Examples of standard accommodations</b> include changes in the setting, scheduling or timing of test administration, as well as alternative ways in which the test questions are presented to a student. They also include changes in the way in which a student produces a response to test questions.	<b>Examples of nonstandard accommodations</b> include reading the reading passages to a student with a print disability. If this form of support alters what is being tested (such as measuring listening comprehension rather than the intended reading comprehension), it is considered a nonstandard accommodation.
<b>Impact on validity and use of the test score:</b> none. The score can be aggregated with the scores of students who took the test without the use of accommodations.	<b>Impact on validity and use of the test score:</b> The score becomes invalid. In this example, the student is considered to be a non-participant when calculating the participation rate for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) purposes. Further, the results of a test taken with a nonstandard accommodation are not included in the calculations for AYP.

### **Who can use accommodations?**

For Montana's Criterion Referenced Test (CRT), standard accommodations are available to all students, based on individual need, as determined by the student's educational team. Furthermore, the accommodation must be something that is routinely used with the student in classroom instruction and assessment for a period of two to three months prior to testing.

Nonstandard accommodations are available for students identified as having a disability IF the accommodation is specified in the student's IEP or 504 Plan. Nonstandard accommodations can be available to LEP students after consultation with the OPI state assessment director (Judy Snow, 406-444-3656 or jsnow@mt.gov) and the OPI bilingual specialist (Lynn Hinch, 406-444-3482 or lhinch@mt.gov). The implication of using nonstandard accommodations from a school accountability perspective is described in the previous section. This eligibility information is summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3: Eligibility and Documentation Requirements for Accommodation Use**

<b>Student Population</b>	<b>Parameters for use of Standard Accommodations</b>	<b>Parameters for Use of Nonstandard Accommodations</b>
<b>General student population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be used, based on individual student need;</li> <li>• Must be a practice routinely used by this student in classroom instruction and assessment for at least 2-3 months prior to testing;</li> <li>• Accommodation(s) used must be coded in the Student Response Booklet on page 2.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not allowed under any circumstances.</li> </ul>
<b>Students with IEPs or 504 Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be used, based on individual student need;</li> <li>• Need for accommodation is documented in the student's IEP/504 plan;</li> <li>• Accommodation(s) used must be coded in the Student Response Booklet on Page 2.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be used if need for accommodation is documented in the student's IEP/504 plan;</li> <li>• Accommodation(s) used must be coded in the Student Response Booklet on Page 2;</li> <li>• Student's results for content area will not be calculated in the averages for AYP determination.</li> </ul>
<b>LEP Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be used, based on individual student need;</li> <li>• Must be a practice routinely used by this student in classroom instruction and assessment for at least 2-3 months prior to testing;</li> <li>• Accommodation(s) used must be coded in the Student Response Booklet on page 2.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be used if need for accommodation is documented in the student's IEP/504 plan or after consultation with the OPI state assessment director and the OPI bilingual specialist.</li> <li>• Accommodation(s) used must be coded in the Student Response Booklet on Page 2;</li> <li>• Student's results for content area will not be calculated in the averages for AYP determination.</li> </ul>

## Guidelines for Selecting and Using Accommodations

Just as testing accommodations are intended to eliminate barriers to meaningful testing, the use of accommodations as a routine part of a student's instruction can support meaningful access to and progress in the general curriculum. There should be a direct link between the strategies used with a student throughout the school year, and the accommodations used by the student for the statewide assessment. In this section, this relationship is explored.

### **Selecting Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment**

While many accommodation strategies have been identified and found effective for students with a wide range of disabilities (See sample Accommodation Checklists in Appendix A), it is important to retain a clear focus on the individual needs and characteristics of each student relative to the activities, materials, and expected outcomes in the classroom. Rather than simply providing supports and accommodations you *think* will help a student learn, experts in the field recommend a systematic consideration of accommodations as a way to identify the most beneficial approach to identifying effective accommodations for instruction and assessment (Thompson, Morse, Sharpe & Hall, 2005; Thurlow, Elliott, Ysseldyke, 2003).

A structured selection process, organized into six steps, is described by Elliott and Thurlow (2006,) in a recent publication focused on the involvement of student with disabilities in statewide testing. The remainder of this discussion about selecting accommodations is organized within their six-step framework (2006, pg. 56). A worksheet that includes these questions is provided in Appendix B.

**Step 1:        In an individual conversation with a student, ask about what helps them learn better. What gets in the way of them showing what they know and can do?**

Students are often the best source of information about what is helpful to them. While this conversation might be easier as a student gets older, it is a valuable skill for students with learning support needs to be able to articulate what they need in order to be successful. A list of questions that you might want to present to the student is presented in Table 4. They could be used to ask questions about activities involved in an upcoming instruction unit or about a test. While you may need to adapt the wording of these questions for individual students, this is a helpful compilation of issues that are important to address. For younger children, providing examples might be very helpful.

**Table 4: Student Accommodations Questionnaire**

(adapted from Elliott & Thurlow, 2006, pg. 58)

Potential Questions to Ask Students about Accommodations
• <i>Do you think that the activity/test [describe for the student] will be okay for you, or is there some way that it could be changed to help you do your best?</i>
• <i>Is there anything about the content of the activity/test or what it asks you to do [describe for the student] that could be changed to help you do your best?</i>
• <i>Is there anything about the activity/test's timing procedures that could be changed to help you do your best?</i>
• <i>Is there anything about when the activity/test is scheduled [describe for the student] that could be changed to help you do your best?</i>
• <i>Is there anything about the way the activity/test is presented [describe for the student] that could be changed to help you do your best?</i>
• <i>Is there anything about how you have to answer in this activity/test [describe for the student] that could be changed to help you do your best?</i>
• <i>Is there anything about the activity/test that could be changed [describe for the student] to help you do your best with it?</i>

**Step 2: Ask parents about the things that they do to help their child complete household tasks or homework.**

Parents may have great insight about supports that have been successful with their children. They may not necessarily think of these supports in terms of accommodations, so asking more generally about what works for their children, what times of the day are best, etc., may be the most effective approach to gathering this information.

**Step 3: Consider a student's strengths and weaknesses in areas linked to the curriculum. Identify those skills or behaviors that seem to consistently get in the way of learning.**

Both strengths and weaknesses provide information that is useful in deciding about accommodations. Identifying a student's strengths allows you to see what avenues you can build on, while understanding areas of weakness points to areas for which you may need to develop alternate performance strategies. For example, a student with a weakness in understanding print who has a great interest and strength in technology may be a good candidate for the use of text reading software to read the test questions.

**Step 4: Teach students how to use accommodations that might be provided.**

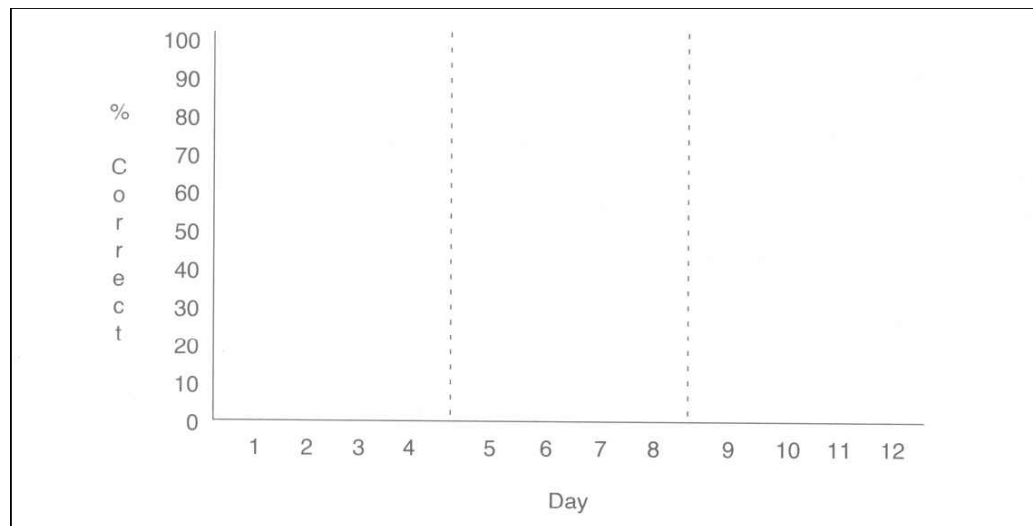
Simply providing an accommodation does not ensure that a student can use it to his or her benefit. Students must be taught how to use the accommodations that are intended to support them. The Montana accommodation requirement that an accommodation be used with a student in the classroom at least two to three months prior to testing is based on the recognition that a student must be comfortable with an accommodation outside of a testing situation for it to function as a support for test taking. This assures that time has been available to provide instruction and practice on its use.

**Step 5: Observe the use and effects of the accommodations.**

Once instruction has been provided, the only way to know whether a student is proficient with an accommodation is to observe its use. Direct observation will not only confirm a student's skill in using the accommodation, it will also allow you to see whether the student finds the accommodation useful enough to continue with its use.

**Step 6: Collect data on the effect of accommodations that are used by individual students.**

Beyond informal observation of the use of accommodations, a structured data based approach is the most reliable method of assessing the effects of accommodation use. Simple curriculum-based measures (e.g., short timed trials in which a skill is assessed) can be done, comparing student performance using accommodations with their performance without using accommodations. Charting this information on a line graph, as shown below, provides an objective way of determining whether the accommodation does, in fact, improve student performance.



Source: Elliott & Thurlow 2006

## **Analyzing Test Demands to Identify Need for Accommodations**

The process outlined above provides comprehensive information, as well as an evaluation strategy to identify those accommodations that are most important for each individual student. There are additional considerations that come into play when identifying accommodations that are needed by a student to participate in Montana's statewide assessments. These testing situations are structured in ways that may differ from classroom routines in important ways. For this reason, it is helpful to ask specific questions about the student relative to the demands of the statewide assessment. Table 5 provides a number of examples of questions you might ask, specifically focused on the dynamics of the testing context. As you review these questions, you will see a clear relationship between the answers and potential accommodations that may be necessary to support the student in taking this test.

**Table 5: Sample Questions to Analyze the Demands of the Test** (modified from Thurlow et al., 2003, pg. 38)

<b>Testing Requirement/Context</b>	<b>Sample Questions to Ask</b>
<b>Setting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can the student focus on his or her own work with 25 to 30 other students in a quiet setting?</li><li>• Does the student display behaviors that are distracting to other students taking the test?</li><li>• Can the student take the test in the same way as it is administered to other students?</li><li>• If the student needs some external supports (e.g., sign language interpreter; native language interpreter), would these accommodations be distracting to other students?</li></ul>
<b>Timing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can the student work continuously for the entire length of a typically administered portion of the test?</li><li>• Does the student use accommodations that require more time to complete individual test items (e.g., magnification tools)?</li></ul>
<b>Scheduling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the student take a medication that dissipates over time, so that optimal performance might occur at a certain time of day?</li><li>• Does the student's anxiety level increase dramatically when working in certain content areas, so that these should be administered after all other content areas are assessed?</li></ul>
<b>Presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can the student listen to and follow oral directions given by an adult or an audiotope?</li><li>• Can the student see and hear?</li><li>• Can the student read?</li></ul>
<b>Response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can the student track from a test booklet to a test response form?</li><li>• Is the student able to manipulate a pencil or other writing instrument?</li></ul>

<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this the first time that the student will be taking this type of test?</li> </ul>
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## **OPI List of Approved Accommodations**

While there should be a clear relationship between accommodations used in the classroom and those used for testing, **there are some accommodations used during instruction that may not be appropriate or allowed for use during statewide assessments.** Like other states, Montana has a list of approved accommodations that can be used for the Criterion Referenced Test. This list has been developed in collaboration with Measured Progress, and corresponds to the Accommodation Coding Grid included on page 2 of the Student Response Booklet. Standard accommodations are identified and described in Table 6, and nonstandard accommodations are presented in Table 7.

**Table 6: Standard Accommodations for Montana’s CRT**

<b>Scheduling Accommodations</b>	
1.	Change in Administration Time: Test is administered at a time of day or a day of the week based on student needs.
2.	Session Duration: Test is administered in appropriate blocks of time for individual student needs, followed by rest breaks.
3.	N/A
<b>Setting Accommodations</b>	
4.	Individual Administration: Test was administered in a one to one situation.*
5.	Small Group Administration: Test was administered to a small group of students.*
6.	Reduce Distracters: Student is seated at a carrel or other physical arrangement that reduces visual distraction.
7.	Alternative Setting: Test is administered to the student in a different setting.*
8.	Change in Personnel: Test is administered by other personnel known to the student (e.g., LEP, Title I, special education teacher).*
9.	Home Setting: Test is administered to the student by school personnel in their home.
10.	Front Row Seating: A student is seated in the front of the classroom when taking the test.*
11.	N/A

**Table 6: cont'd**

<b>Equipment Accommodations</b>	
12. Magnification:	Student used equipment to magnify test materials.
13. Student (not groups of students) wears equipment to reduce environmental noises.	
14. Template:	Student uses a template.
15. Amplification:	Student uses amplification equipment (e.g., hearing aid or auditory trainer) while taking test.
16. Writing Tools:	Student uses a typewriter or word processor (without activating spell checker).
17. Voice Activation:	Student speaks response into computer equipped with voice activation software.
18. Bilingual Dictionary:	Student uses a bilingual dictionary (Note: Bilingual dictionary could include a simplified English dictionary or glossary, subject area vocabulary list).*
<b>Recording Accommodations</b>	
19. Dictation:	The student dictates answers to a Test Administrator who records them in the Test Booklet.
20. Writing Tools:	The student marks or writes answers with the assistance of a technology device or special equipment. The students' answers are transferred by the Test Administrator to the Test Booklet.
21. Assistive Technology:	Another form of assistive technology routinely used by the student (that does not change the intent or content of the test) was used by the student (not groups of students).
<b>Modality Accommodations</b>	
22. Oral Presentation Science and Mathematics:	Tests were read to the student by the Test Administrator. For the reading test, reading passages may <b>not</b> be read aloud. Note: Readers must read test items/questions to the student word-for-word exactly as written. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to the student regarding the meaning of words, intent of test questions, or responses to test items/questions.
23. Test Interpretation:	Tests, including directions, were interpreted for students who are deaf or hearing-impaired (with the exception of interpreting the reading test).*
24. Test Directions with Verification:	An administrator gave test directions with verification (by using a highlighter) so that the student understood them.*
25. Test Directions Support:	An administrator assisted students in understanding test directions, including giving directions in native language.*
26. Braille:	A Braille version of the test was used by the student.
27. Large Print:	A large print version of the test was used by the student.
28. Other:	With verification from OPI in advance of the testing window, some other approved accommodation was used by a student.

\*Accommodation suggested as appropriate for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students

**Table 7: Non-Standard Accommodations for Montana's CRT**

<b>Nonstandard Accommodations</b>	
29. Reading aloud the reading passages to a student or the student uses text-reader software for reading passages. A student for which this type of nonstandard accommodation might be used would be a student with a learning disability in reading who without the text being read, could not participate in this portion of the test.	
30. Student uses a calculator, number chart, arithmetic table, or manipulatives on the no calculator sections of the mathematics test. A student for which this type of nonstandard accommodation might be used would be a student with a learning disability in mathematics who, without the use of a calculator, would not be able to perform any mathematics calculations or functions.	
31. Other - Reading: With verification from OPI in advance of the testing window, some other approved accommodation was used by a student.	
32. Other - Mathematics: With verification from OPI in advance of the testing window, some other approved accommodation is used by a student.	
33. Other - Science: With verification from OPI in advance of the testing window, some other approved accommodation is used by a student.	

### **Documenting Accommodations on a Student's IEP**

There are several places on the Individual Education Plan where consideration of factors that may require accommodations and documentation of these needs occur.

1. **Consideration of Special Factors:** Questions in this section focus on behavior, need for assistive technology, communication and language skills. Each of these areas may suggest the need for accommodations. Further, a student's need for Braille is documented in this section. If checked "yes", a braille test format would be required.

<b>CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL FACTORS</b>		
	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
• Does the student's behavior impede his/her learning or that of others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Does the student have communication needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Does the student require assistive technology devices or services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Has the student been determined to be "Limited English Proficient"?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Any item above checked "Yes" must be addressed in the IEP.</u></b>		
For a student with blindness or visual impairment <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
• Does the student need training in orientation and mobility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>If "Yes" is checked,</u></b> training must be addressed in the IEP.		
• Does the student need instruction in Braille or the use of Braille?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>If "No" is checked,</u></b> describe in the notes why instruction in Braille or the use of Braille is not appropriate. This decision must be based on evaluation results.		

2. **Supplementary Aids and Services:** This section of the IEP requires the identification of “aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.” These services and supports represent potential instructional and testing accommodations.

Student Name: _____ IEP Date: _____	
<b>SUPPLEMENTARY AIDS AND SERVICES</b>	
Regular education classes, other education-related settings, and extracurricular and nonacademic settings, where accommodations/modifications are needed.	Specific accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, assistive technology or other forms of support to enable children with disabilities to be educated with children without disabilities. Include program modifications or supports for teachers, related service providers, transportation providers and others working with this student. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>None Needed</b>

3. **Participation in State/Districtwide Assessments:** This section of the IEP requires IEP teams to specify how the student will participate in assessment, and with what supports. Teams should be familiar with available standard and non-standard accommodations, including this information in the student’s IEP during the annual meeting.

PARTICIPATION IN STATE/DISTRICTWIDE ASSESSMENTS	
The student will participate in the State/Districtwide assessments in the following manner: (Check one box for each test.)	
<b>CRT Tests (Grades 3-8, 10)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Without accommodations <input type="checkbox"/> With accommodation(s) <input type="checkbox"/> CRT-Alternate*	<b>Districtwide Tests</b> <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Without accommodations <input type="checkbox"/> With accommodation(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate Assessment
Identify any test accommodations that must be provided for the student: CRT: _____ Districtwide: _____	
For any student who participates in an alternate assessment describe: Why the child cannot participate in the regular assessment, and: _____ Why the particular alternate assessment selected is appropriate for the child. _____	
* The student may not participate in the CRT-Alternate unless the student’s demonstrated cognitive abilities and adaptive behavior require substantial adjustments to the regular curriculum; learning objectives and expected outcomes focus on functional application, as shown by the IEP’s goals/objectives; <u>and</u> the student requires direct and extensive instruction to acquire, maintain, regularize and transfer skills.	
For students who participate in the CRT-Alternate, the student’s IEP must contain benchmarks or short-term objectives.	

## Summarizing:

### Do's & Do Not's in Using Testing Accommodations

The information provided in this manual is intended to provide guidance about effective practices in identifying, using, and evaluating accommodations designed to improve curriculum access and learning outcomes for students with diverse needs. To summarize, a list of “do’s” and “do not’s” relative to the use of testing accommodations is presented. These guidelines relate to the purpose of the assessment, what happens with the student during daily instruction, and common sense. It is likely that you will continue to add to this list, based on your experience and ongoing evaluation of “what works” for your students.

**Table 8: Do’s & Do Not's in Using Testing Accommodations**

(adapted from information in Thurlow et al., 2003, pg. 70)

<b>Do.....</b>	<b>Do not.....</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• make accommodation decisions on an individual basis for students.</li><li>• systematically use accommodations during instruction and carry these same practices into the assessment process.</li><li>• base the decision about accommodations, both for instruction and for assessment, on the needs of the student.</li><li>• consult the state list of testing accommodations after determining what accommodations the student needs. Reevaluate the importance of accommodations that are not allowed. If an accommodation is critical for the student, you may submit a request to OPI for approval to use it.</li><li>• evaluate the student’s accommodations periodically because student needs change over time.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• make accommodation decisions for groups of students.</li><li>• introduce a new accommodation for the first time for an assessment.</li><li>• base the decision about what accommodations a student will use on the student’s disability category.</li><li>• start from the state list of accommodations when considering what accommodations a student will use in an upcoming test.</li><li>• pick accommodations once and then never re-evaluate the need for them or for new ones.</li></ul>

## Coding the Use of Accommodations on the CRT

When students DO use some type of accommodation when taking the CRT, it is necessary to document this use in the Student Response Booklet. The specific types of accommodations used are coded by number, based on the list of approved accommodations. The table below identifies the accommodations by number. Complete descriptions of these accommodations were provided in the previous section.

**Table 9: Available Accommodations Identified by Coding Number**

<b>Standard Accommodations by Number</b>	
1. Change in administration time	15. Amplification
2. Session duration	16. Writing tools (equipment)
3. N/A	17. Voice activation
4. Individual administration	18. Bilingual dictionary
5. Small group administration	19. Dictation
6. Reduce distracters	20. Writing tools (recording)
7. Alternative setting	21. Assistive technology
8. Change in personnel	22. Oral presentation Science and Math
9. Home setting	23. Test interpretation
10. Front row seating	24. Test directions with verification
11. N/A	25. Test directions support
12. Magnification	26. Braille
13. Student (not groups of students) wears equipment to reduce environmental noises.	27. Large print
14. Template	28. Other
<b>Nonstandard Accommodations by Number</b>	
29. Oral presentation of reading test	32. Other - Mathematics (with verification from OPI)
30. Calculator use on no-calculator section of math test	33. Other - Science (with verification from OPI)
31. Other - Reading (with verification from OPI)	

# **Sample Grade 8, Page 2 Student Response Booklet (SRB)**

The numbers are bubbled in by the Test Administration in the designated section as illustrated below. Mark ALL accommodations used in each subject area.

Complete appropriate sections of this page after testing is complete.

**Section 1:** Required only for public schools and private schools accredited by the Montana Board of Public Education. **TO BE COMPLETED BY SCHOOL TEST COORDINATOR.**

<b>G</b>	<input type="radio"/> Student not enrolled (For example: homeschooled student) <input type="radio"/> Former LEP (cannot be current LEP) <input type="radio"/> Student enrolled less than 180 hours <u>and</u> taking a reading or mathematics course. <input type="radio"/> Student not in school entire academic year <input type="radio"/> Student not in district entire academic year <input type="radio"/> Student participated through alternate assessment this year. <b>Note:</b> Any student participating in the alternate assessment must be identified as a special education student with an IEP in the AIM student information system.
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**Section 2:** Required only for public schools and private schools accredited by the Montana Board of Public Education. **TO BE COMPLETED BY THE TEST ADMINISTRATOR.**

<b>STANDARD ACCOMMODATIONS</b> (Mark all that apply.)	
Reading	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 <input type="radio"/> 8 <input type="radio"/> 9 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 12 <input type="radio"/> 13 <input type="radio"/> 14 <input type="radio"/> 15 <input type="radio"/> 16 <input type="radio"/> 17 <input type="radio"/> 18 <input type="radio"/> 19 <input type="radio"/> 20 <input type="radio"/> 21 <input type="radio"/> 22 <input type="radio"/> 23 <input type="radio"/> 24 <input type="radio"/> 25 <input type="radio"/> 26 <input type="radio"/> 27 <input type="radio"/> 28
Mathematics	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 <input type="radio"/> 8 <input type="radio"/> 9 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 12 <input type="radio"/> 13 <input type="radio"/> 14 <input type="radio"/> 15 <input type="radio"/> 16 <input type="radio"/> 17 <input type="radio"/> 18 <input type="radio"/> 19 <input type="radio"/> 20 <input type="radio"/> 21 <input type="radio"/> 22 <input type="radio"/> 23 <input type="radio"/> 24 <input type="radio"/> 25 <input type="radio"/> 26 <input type="radio"/> 27 <input type="radio"/> 28
Science	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 <input type="radio"/> 8 <input type="radio"/> 9 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 12 <input type="radio"/> 13 <input type="radio"/> 14 <input type="radio"/> 15 <input type="radio"/> 16 <input type="radio"/> 17 <input type="radio"/> 18 <input type="radio"/> 19 <input type="radio"/> 20 <input type="radio"/> 21 <input type="radio"/> 22 <input type="radio"/> 23 <input type="radio"/> 24 <input type="radio"/> 25 <input type="radio"/> 26 <input type="radio"/> 27 <input type="radio"/> 28
<b>NON-STANDARD ACCOMMODATIONS</b> (Mark all that apply.)	
Reading	<input type="radio"/> 29 <input type="radio"/> 31
Mathematics	<input type="radio"/> 30 <input type="radio"/> 32
Science	<input type="radio"/> 33

Grades 4, 8  
& 10 only

Grades 4, 8  
& 10 only

**Section 3:** Only for private schools not accredited by the Montana Board of Public Education. **TO BE COMPLETED BY SCHOOL TEST COORDINATOR.**

<b>(Required Coding)</b>	<input type="radio"/> Student enrolled in a private non-accredited school
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<b>I</b>	<b>GENDER</b> <i>(Optional Coding)</i>
	<input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Male

<b>J</b>	<b>ETHNICITY</b> <i>(Optional Coding)</i>
	<i>(Mark only one.)</i> <input type="radio"/> American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="radio"/> Asian <input type="radio"/> Hispanic <input type="radio"/> Black or African American <input type="radio"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander <input type="radio"/> White

<b>K</b>	<b>PROGRAM INFORMATION</b> <i>(Optional Coding)</i>
	<i>(Mark all that apply.)</i> <input type="radio"/> SE (student has an IEP) <input type="radio"/> 504 <input type="radio"/> MG <input type="radio"/> GT <input type="radio"/> LEP/ELL (Cannot be former LEP) <input type="radio"/> Former LEP (Cannot be current LEP) <input type="radio"/> F/RL <input type="radio"/> Significant Cognitive Disability (Student should participate through CRT-ALT)

## Frequently Asked Questions About Accommodations

Common questions asked during previous test administration years have been compiled for your reference. We will add to this list as new questions arise.

### **1. Do accommodations change the student's score or the way in which the student's score is reported?**

Accommodations do not result in any change of score. Standard accommodations do not result in any change in the reporting of a student's score. Nonstandard accommodations invalidate a test score. The student is considered a non-participant when calculating participation rates for AYP, and the score is not included in calculating a school's proficiency rate for AYP.

### **2. What is the difference between Standard Accommodation #24 ("An administrator gives test directions with verification (by using a highlighter) that the student understands them") and Standard Accommodation #25 ("An administrator assists students in understanding test directions including giving directions in native language.")?**

It is easy to see why clarification is needed here! Accommodation #24 represents one specific strategy available to the teacher to ensure that the student knows what to do - highlighting key words in the directions. The word "verification" in this sentence is confusing. Who is doing the verifying - the teacher or the student? In practice, verification could occur in either way. The student might highlight key words in the instructions to verify their understanding of them for the teacher OR the teacher might highlight words to accentuate the critical information in the directions. Since this accommodation is worded so specifically as to require the use of a highlighter, Accommodation #25 may be a better choice if highlighting for verification (whoever is doing the highlighting and verifying!) is not needed. The wording of Accommodation #25, including giving directions in native language, indicates that other methods of helping students understand test directions would also fall under this accommodation item.

### **3. Can a student with a disability write in the test booklet and then have answers transferred to the test document by another person?**

In this situation, a response accommodation is needed and the accommodation that most closely reflects this situation is described in Accommodation #20 ("The student marks or writes answers with the assistance of a technology device or special equipment. The students' answers are transferred by the test administrator to the Test Booklet."). While no technology was used by the student, the second half of the statement describes the situation in your question. The need for this type of accommodation should be specified on the student's IEP.

**4. We have a student with dyslexia on a 504 accommodation plan. The plan specifies test support as a regular accommodation. What test accommodations are allowable in this situation on the CRT?**

The accommodations that would be available for this student are the same accommodations that the student is receiving on an ongoing basis in the classroom as part of her 504 plan, unless the strategies you use on a routine basis do not appear on the OPI Accommodation list included in this manual. The most common accommodation practices are included in this list.

**5. I was just at a math in-service training session where it was announced that students can use manipulatives for the math portion of the CRT. Did I misunderstand?**

Yes, you did misunderstand or the information provided was not correct. Manipulatives are not allowed on the CRT. They could provide an unfair advantage and their use was not factored into the test development. The CRT has a calculator use portion for which calculators are intended and recommended. In addition, math reference sheets appropriate for grade level and test items are provided by Measured Progress for each student taking the CRT. Grades 3-5 math reference sheets contain punch-out rulers and formulas; grades 6-8 and 10 math reference sheets provide a list of formulas to which students may refer when answering questions.

**6. A special educator asked if she could group students together if they all require the same standard accommodation. This would require using the same form of the CRT for all students.**

Yes, providing that the use of this accommodation for testing is documented on the IEP of each individual student in the group.

**7. What does Standard Accommodation #14 - using a template - mean?**

A template is something that surrounds a work area, isolating sections so that smaller areas are exposed. For example, a template might be placed over a test booklet to allow only a single question to be read at a time.

**8. What part(s) of the test can be read aloud as a standard accommodation?**

All of the math and science tests. The reading questions and answer choices. The reading passages can NOT be read aloud in any form as a standard accommodation.

**9. When transferring the student response to a constructed response item to the Student Response Booklet (SRB), what should a test administrator do when not all of the writing is legible and there are a number of misspellings?**

The test administrator should directly transfer the student's constructed response to the SRB as the student wrote it. In other words, if the test administrator is able to decipher the words written, they should be transferred (including misspellings) as the student wrote the constructed response. In a situation where legibility makes it difficult for the test administrator to recognize what the student wrote, the test administrator could ask the student what word it was that he wrote and record that word on the answer document. The test administrator must remain neutral and not read anything into what the student wrote. If it is too illegible and the student is unable to tell the test administrator what the word is, the test administrator will need to leave that word out. In addition, the test administrator should not add any organization to the student response.

**10. For the make-up test, we have only a few students, so they are testing in a small group. Do we need to code small group as an accommodation?**

No. As a make-up, a small group is not an accommodation.

**11. Does the law allow accommodations for LEP students for the CRT?**

Yes. For the CRT, standard accommodations are allowed for any individual student for whom the accommodation is a routine part of classroom instruction and assessment. Routine is defined as in use in the classroom two to three months prior to testing.

**12. We have two students who have, as a standard accommodation, dictation of their responses. Would you clarify what that means? Does a test administrator need to be in total control of the Student Response Booklet, and mark down every answer? What about the short answer and constructed response questions?**

What is the reason the student needs to dictate responses? If this is an accommodation provided for a student with physical or sensory limitations that limit their ability to produce a written response, the teacher would be in total control of the Student Response Booklet, marking down every answer provided by the student. If the dictation is required for another reason - some type of learning disability that impacts writing, for example, then it is necessary to understand under what circumstances they need the accommodation. They may be able to bubble in answers to multiple choice questions, but need help with constructed responses. They may need help in both areas. The decision about who is in control of the Student Response Booklet depends upon these individual circumstances.

**13. If a student dictates a constructed response to a scribe, can the scribe write it on a blank sheet of paper and then have the student copy it from the blank sheet of paper onto the test booklet?**

That would be permissible, but what is the point of having the student copy the response from the scribe's work? The student must have some challenges in producing written communication, so it would make sense to work on that outside of the testing situation.

## References

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## **Appendix A: Sample Accommodation Checklists**

## Accommodation Checklist <sup>1</sup>

<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Subject Area(s)/Course(s)</b>
1. Highlighted texts	
2. Taped texts	
3. Simplified texts	
4. Manipulatives	
5. Note-taking assistance	
6. Access to study aid (e.g., number chart, map, dictionary)	
7. Peer buddy	
8. Peer tutor	
9. Assignment notebook	
10. Shortened assignments	
11. Alternate presentation format	
12. Small-group instruction	
13. Repeat directions	
14. Increased verbal response	
15. Check for understanding	
16. Frequent breaks	
17. Preferential seating	
18. Assistive technology (identify)	
19. Calculator	
20. Study guides	
22. Tests in special education classroom	
23. Oral tests	
24. Alternative tests	
25. Other	

## Common Instructional Accommodations, A to Z <sup>1</sup>

Altered assignments	Note-taking aids
Audiotaped directions	On-task reminders
Bold print	Outline text
Bulletin board strategy reminders	Paper holders (magnets, tape, etc.)
Color coding	Peer support
Crib notes	Quality monitoring
Darker lines	Questions in margins
Directions clarified or simplified	Reader
Enlarged materials	Raised print
Fewer tasks per assignment	Shorter assignments
Finger spacing, counting strategies	Seat location change
Graph paper for calculations	Touch talker (communication device)
Green color as cue to continue	Tutoring (cross-age, peer)
Harder items first	Underline key points
Headphones (individual)	Use reminders
Individual work area	Visual prompts
Isolated items	Vocabulary cues on paper or board
Keywords highlighted	Wider margins
Knock-on-desk cues	Word list on board
Large pictures	Word processor
Limit number of tasks	X-out text to reduce reading
Memory aids	Yellow paper
Natural supports	Zero-wrong strategies

**Appendix B:**  
**Classroom Accommodation Worksheet**  
(Elliott & Thurlow, 2006)

## Classroom Accommodations Worksheet<sup>1</sup>

Follow these steps to identify accommodations that are needed for classroom instruction and for classroom tests for a specific student. Be sure to consider specific characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of the student for whom this worksheet is being completed. For each step, be sure to separately consider instruction and tests, and use the questions to spark ideas about useful accommodations. You will find it helpful to complete this worksheet with other individuals who know the student.

<sup>1</sup>Source: Elliott & Thurlow, 2006, pg. 57 (format modified)

	Reflections on Each Question	Possible Instructional Accommodations	Possible Classroom Test Accommodations
1. What helps the student learn better or perform better? What gets in the way of the student showing what he or she really knows and can do?			
2. What have the student's parents or guardian told you about things that they do to help the student complete household tasks or school homework?			
3. What are the student's strengths and weaknesses? What skills or behaviors often get in the way of learning or performance?			

	<b>Reflections on Each Question</b>	<b>Possible Instructional Accommodations</b>	<b>Possible Classroom Test Accommodations</b>
4. What accommodations has the student been taught to use? Are there other accommodations on which the student needs training?			
5. For which accommodations have effects been observed? What accommodations is the student willing to use?			
6. Have any quantitative data (e.g., from one-minute tests) been collected on the effects of accommodations?			
7. Is there any other relevant information that might affect the provision of accommodations, either during classroom instruction or during tests?			

<sup>1</sup> Source: Elliott & Thurlow, 2006, pg. 57 (format modified)

## NOTES

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**Montana Office of Public Instruction**  
**Denise Juneau, Superintendent**